

FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

WINTER 2017

Date: December 15, 2016 @ MT Wild, Helena, MT

Attendees: Karin Boyd, Terry Chute, Chuck Dalby, Senator Jedediah Hinkle, Michael Johns, Alan Johnstone, Clint Peck, Meriweather Schroeder-Smith, Bill Semmens, Jim Stone, Representative Jeffrey Welborn, Bill Wichers, Joseph Willauer, Nancy Winslow (phone)

FWP staff: Michelle McGree, Bruce Rich, Jannice Richardson

Applicants and others in attendance: Lance Breen, Joe Bodner, Ladd Knotek, Mike Sanctuary, Will McDowell, Lisa Bay, Jim Olsen, Eric Roberts, Grant Grisak

Panel business:

An approved Future Fisheries project (Redwater River culvert fish passage 023-2013) was recently completed, but with significant cost overages. In statute, the department is allowed to issue overage funds not to exceed 10% of the original grant award. The overage ask is for \$10,000. The panel asked to wait on discussion of the matter until the current projects discussion was completed, as the funds would affect current grant awards.

Michelle discussed the options for funding in the current cycle. A 35% cut of overall requested funding needs to be made to meet the budget. The panel discussed possible ways to evaluate the projects to determine funding priorities.

Application discussions and funding recommendations:

- 1) **East Fork Bitterroot River riparian fencing and revegetation (003-2017).** The East Fork of the Bitterroot River (Ravalli County) is a headwater stream to the Bitterroot River and supports populations of Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout. It is listed as impaired for sediment and temperature by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). This project aims to reduce sediment and thermal loading by increasing riparian vegetation and encouraging point bar development and sinuosity. Riparian fencing will be installed along 2,000 feet of the stream, nursery plants and shrub transplants will be used, and browse protectors will protect many plants. The fencing configuration will create a large buffer and restoration activities are meant to enhance natural recruitment and repair banks when necessary.

Amount Requested: \$15,207

FWP Recommendation: We recommend funding the project at **\$13,800** as monitoring (\$1,000) and travel (\$407) are not allowable costs. We also recommend that the applicant get a statement from the local fisheries biologist showing support of the project.

Project Representative: Heather Barber (phone)

Discussion Items:

- They will work directly with the ranch manager on the grazing plan. Geum Environmental Consulting will help with developing the grazing plan. The number of animals will not be reduced on the ranch.
- The DEQ funding will not be available till July 2017.
- The planting could be done in phases.
- There is a letter of biologist support with the submitted application.

Motion: Motion to approve the recommended amount of \$13,800 for the project.

Motion Made by: Chuck Dalby

Motion Second by: Bill Wichers

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$13,800 *(funding further revised at end of meeting; see end of minutes)*

- 2) **Big Otter Creek riparian protection and improvement** (002-2017). Big Otter Creek (Judith Basin County) is a popular recreational fishery for Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, and Brook Trout. Currently, cattle congregate at the stream bottom of Big Otter Creek. This project would fence ¼ mile of stream to encourage vegetation and stream health and install a culvert to keep sediment out of the stream.

Amount Requested: \$4,249

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$4,249**) if the applicant can provide information on the culvert specifications and a description of how the culvert will address erosion and sediment inputs. We would also like additional information on the applicant's plan for grazing management.

Project Representative: Joe Bodner

Discussion Items:

- The project is for one culvert (12' in size).
- Fish do not come up the creek/spring.
- The project is mainly for sediment control.
- The area is currently not used for grazing due to the current condition. The rest of the area is fenced off.

Motion: Motion to approve the requested amount of \$4,249 for the project.

Motion Made by: Clint Peck

Motion Second by: Terry Chute

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$4,249

- 3) **Fresno Reservoir habitat enhancement** (004-2017). Fresno Reservoir (Hill County) was the second most fished waterbody in FWP region 6 in 2015 and contains sportfish populations of Yellow Perch, Walleye, Northern Pike, and Black Crappie. Fish abundance and condition are currently limited by prey availability and habitat. This project intends to install Christmas tree habitat structures at critical points in the reservoir for five years, which should improve spawning and rearing habitat for Yellow Perch, thereby improving sportfishing opportunities for Yellow Perch and their predators. The applicant will monitor the response of the fish community.

Amount Requested: \$3,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$3,000**).

Project Representative: Lance Breen

Discussion Items:

- Walleye currently present in the reservoir average between 14.5 and 16” in length and are skinny.
- The success rate of using Christmas trees at other waterbodies for creating fish habitat is mixed. It is not the cure-all.
- Yellow Perch are the primary forage for Walleye.
- The project would establish funding for materials and monitoring for the first five years of the project. The hope is that another entity, such as Walleyes Unlimited, would take over the project at that time.
- The Bureau of Reclamation has been approached about funding for the project. They support the project but have not committed any funds.

Motion: Motion to approve the recommended amount of \$3,000 for the project.

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Joe Willauer

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$3,000

- 4) **Jack Creek riparian restoration** (006-2017). Lower Jack Creek (Madison County), near the confluence with the Madison River, supports populations of Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout and has been the site of active channel migration and heavy erosion. This location has been historically dynamic and experienced alterations such as channel straightening, placement of carbody bank armor, and unfavorable management practices. This project takes place on three private property holdings and 1,200 feet of stream. Four actively eroding bank sites will be restored with bankfull benches, sloping, and native plantings. The funding request was reduced by \$13,000, as that amount was covered by Northwestern Energy MAD TAC with the specific intention to reduce the overall request to Future Fisheries.

Amount Requested: \$25,509.60

FWP Recommendation: We recommend funding of this project (**\$25,509.60**) but recognize that the project appears appropriate for DEQ 319 funds. We ask the applicant to address grazing management and fencing locations.

Project Representative: Sunni Heikes-Knapton (phone)

Discussion Items:

- The Madison CD is waiting on a TMDL to complete a watershed restoration plan and be eligible for DEQ funding.
- The landowner will commit to a 20-year maintenance agreement.
- Final decisions to come of what type of rock will be used in the project. May be able to reduce cobble toe and increase willow.
- Some funding for the project is not fully committed to date. Other funding is not contingent on Future Fisheries funding. Northwest Energy funds are secured.

Motion: Motion to approve the recommended amount of \$25,509.60.

Motion Made by: Chuck Dalby

Motion Second by: Karin Boyd

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$25,509.60 (*funding further revised at end of meeting; see end of minutes*)

- 5) **Moore's Creek channel and riparian restoration** (010-2017). Moore's Creek (Madison County) is a tributary to the Madison River immediately west of Ennis. The stream is assumed to support Rainbow, Brown, and/or Brook Trout. The stream and riparian areas are highly degraded because of past management practices and channel manipulations; currently water quality is impacted by *E. Coli* and sediment. This project would restore the stream channel to the proper dimensions and improve riparian areas and water quality through fencing, riparian plantings, livestock management, and irrigation improvement. An upstream project was completed in 2016 (010-2015).

Amount Requested: \$40,041.60

FWP Recommendation: FWP recognizes the uncertainties related to the fishery and the significant impact to sediment/water quality, and therefore recommend funding the project at 50% of the request (**\$20,020.80**), not including travel. FWP suggests that the applicant apply to the DEQ 319 program and request that the applicant address the following questions:

- What kind of fence is proposed? Why is the buffer narrow at outside meander bends?
- Describe the rationale behind constraining overbank flows.
- Explain the pond portion of the project.

Project Representative: Sunni Heikes-Knapton (phone)

Discussion Items:

- The Madison CD is waiting on a TMDL to complete a watershed restoration plan and be eligible for DEQ funding.
- The creek is highly visible to the public and important for Ennis. The project will improve aesthetics and fish habitat.
- A phased approach to the project would be hard.
- The wetland soil maps show the project costs at a worst-case scenario and allow for the purchase of wetland sod if necessary.
- The pond maintenance budget is the standard cost for removing debris.
- This is an NRCS project that will have a comprehensive (grazing, fencing—electric, wildlife friendly) approach.
- There are no good records for past Artic Grayling spawning in the creek. There is no recent fish data and Dave Moser (FWP) would complete a before and after fish survey.
- Permits are needed for the highway right-away.
- Funding is currently all pending (NW Energy, HB223, TU funding)

1st Motion: Motion to deny funding for the project.

Motion Made by: Michael Johns

Motion Second by: Clint Peck

Panel Action: 5 Yes, 8 No; Motion fails

2nd Motion: Motion to approve the recommended amount of \$20,020.80

Motion Made by: Chuck Dalby

Motion Second by: Jed Hinkle

Panel Action: 8 Yes, 5 No; Motion passes

Amount Approved: \$20,020.80

- 6) **LaValle Creek culvert replacement** (007-2017). LaValle Creek (Missoula County) is a tributary to the Clark Fork River that supports only non-introgressed (genetically pure) Westslope Cutthroat Trout. This population occupies approximately 4-5 miles of stream and is managed to sustain genetic purity. This project is intended to ensure connectivity within the reach they currently occupy. Two undersized culverts, likely serving as velocity barriers during high flow periods and disrupting natural hydrologic function, would be replaced with wood bridges that meet stream simulation and 100-year flood criteria. The goal is to enhance upstream passage for stream-resident, genetically pure Westslope Cutthroat Trout and help ensure long-term persistence.

Amount Requested: \$18,520

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$18,520**) but ask the applicant to provide additional information regarding whether or not the resident population will continue to be considered an isolate (and will outmigrating fry be impacted by dewatering?) and if the fluvial population will see any project benefits (consistent recruitment to the Clark Fork is “unlikely,” presumably due to dewatering). Are future projects to address dewatering a possibility, or is dewatering desirable to maintain the isolate?

Project Representative: Ladd Knotek

Discussion Items:

- Fish population is currently 80-100 fish/100 meters. It is a moderate density/lower density than adjacent stream.
- The stream is intermittent and not connected to the Clark Fork River. The project expands connectivity within the region.
- The angling days are very low.

Motion: Motion to approve the requested amount of \$18,520.

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Chuck Dalby

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$18,520 (*funding further revised at end of meeting; see end of minutes*)

- 1) **Marshall Creek fish passage** (008-2017). Marshall Creek (Missoula County) is a third order tributary to the Clark Fork River located just upstream of the City of Missoula. It is an important source of natural Westslope Cutthroat Trout recruitment that is located near a large city and significant angling constituency. This project would continue fish habitat enhancement work in the lower watershed by replacing two undersized culverts, which act as velocity barriers during moderate and high flow periods, with larger counter-sunk culverts that will accommodate 100-year flows and bankfull channel width. The goal is to enhance upstream fish passage for adult and juvenile cutthroat trout in an established spawning and rearing area.

Amount Requested: \$8,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$8,000**).

Project Representative: Ladd Knotek

Discussion Items:

- Fish are 95% pure. People can fish it, but most don't.
- A bridge was too expensive. Is an unmaintained county road, not on list to replace.

- Population is doing ok; how will this improve things? Will help persistence, genetics.

Motion: Motion to approve the requested amount of \$8,000

Motion Made by: Michael Johns

Motion Second by: Joseph Willauer

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$8,000

- 1) **Mill Creek fish ladder** (009-2017). Mill Creek (Missoula County) is a tributary to the Clark Fork and supports populations of Rainbow Trout, Rainbow X Cutthroat Trout hybrids, Brown Trout, and Mountain Whitefish. In 2005, a fish ladder was installed to allow fish passage on the recruitment-limited and heavily fished stream. The ladder has functioned adequately for a decade but is now in need of replacement. This project would replace the fish ladder with a larger, more operational unit to provide year-round fish passage on Mill Creek.

Amount Requested: \$9,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$9,000**) but request the applicant to elaborate on the ability of the new structure to last longer than 10 years.

Project Representative: Ladd Knotek

Discussion Items:

- The original ladder was a band aid that was meant to last 5 years. The ladder is now 10 years old.
- Ladder will be made of steel, have longer life.
- Ladder will create better flow velocities to pass fish (highest priority).

Motion: Motion to approve the requested amount of \$9,000

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Terry Chute

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$9,000

- 2) **Ninemile Creek channel restoration** (012-2017). Ninemile Creek (Missoula County) is a tributary to the Clark Fork River and supports populations of Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Brook Trout, and Bull Trout. Past placer mining practices and associated activities led to alteration of channel morphology, disconnection from tributaries, eroding banks, and fish passage barriers. This project is one phase of a much larger project that has been systematically restoring the upper Ninemile drainage. Future Fisheries funded projects in many tributaries (e.g. Sawpit, Mattie V, Kennedy Creeks). Fish response, in the form of large spawning redds, was observed in 2016. This project involves revegetation of the site, re-sloping of site topography, and reconstruction of the stream channel. Mining spoil piles on Ninemile Creek will be removed to decrease sediment sources and establish a natural floodplain.

Amount Requested: \$32,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$32,000**).

Project Representative: Paul Parson (phone)

Discussion Items:

- Funding from Lolo National Forest is not in the Forest Service's budget. The project is eligible for funding as it comes available; most likely from funds available at fiscal year-end. There is \$60K coming from DEQ and a TU fundraiser.
- There is good economy of scale in the project at \$60/foot.
- Mid-October 2017 is the construction window.

Motion: Motion to approve \$20,000 for the project.

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Jeff Wellborn

Panel Action: 12 Yes, 1 No; Motion Passes

Amount Approved: \$20,000

- 3) **North Fork Cottonwood Creek fish passage** (013-2017). North Fork Cottonwood Creek (Powell County) is a tributary to Cottonwood Creek in the Clark Fork River drainage and supports populations of Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Brook Trout. An undersized culvert has been a partial barrier to fish passage on the Beaverhead Deer Lodge National Forest. This project would replace the culvert with a larger culvert specifically designed to enhance fish passage for native trout. The goal is to maintain a single, connected population of cutthroat trout throughout the three forks of Cottonwood Creek and enhance the long-term viability of a large conservation population of pure Westslope Cutthroat Trout.

Amount Requested: \$37,710

FWP Recommendation: We recommend funding the project with the exception of oversight (\$800), and travel (\$200) for a total of (**\$36,710**).

Project Representative: Will McDowell

Discussion Items:

- The planned design of the project includes an arch, not a bridge. The design was determined by the Forest Service.

Motion: Motion to approve the recommended funding of \$36,710.

Motion Made by: Terry Chute

Motion Second by: Michael Johns

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$36,710

- 4) **Racetrack Creek Johnson diversion replacement** (014-2017). Racetrack Creek (Powell County) is a tributary to the Clark Fork River that supports populations of Brown Trout, Mountain Whitefish, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Longnose sucker, and Slimy Sculpin. The project area has been limited by dewatering in mid to late summer and high temperatures. Other complementary projects have been focused on improving instream flows, so this project intends to build on those efforts by providing fish passage to the habitat features upstream to the Berg diversion (1.6 miles) and downstream to the lower, cold-water (groundwater) area of the creek. This project would replace an irrigation diversion that blocks upstream fish passage and entrains fish with a rock weir diversion that enhances passage. The goal is to enhance fish passage and eliminate entrainment in a high priority watershed.

Amount Requested: \$23,680

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding, with the exception of oversight (\$600), and travel (\$200) for a total of **\$22,880**. We request that the applicant further describe the concrete weir and its performance and maintenance and we would also like to see a statement of support by the landowner.

Project Representative: Will McDowell

Discussion Items:

- The project currently only has one other funding source; the Clark Fork Coalition. Other funding has been applied for, the project hasn't ranked as high as other projects.
- Eventually want to install a fish screen.
- Mostly Brown Trout and Mountain Whitefish in this section of stream.
- There are stream flow limitations in the area.

Motion: Motion to approve the recommended amount of \$22,880.

Motion Made by: Alan Johnstone

Motion Second by: Chuck Dalby

Panel Action: 12 Yes, 1 No; Motion Passes

Amount Approved: \$22,880

- 5) **Nevada Creek channel restoration** (011-2017). Nevada Creek (Powell County) is a tributary to the middle Blackfoot River and supports populations of Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Rainbow Trout, and Brown Trout. The project area was historically straightened and a non-functional riparian area caused the channel to erode and downcut. In 2010, an adjacent channel restoration project (038-2010) reduced sediment, increased stream complexity, improved riparian condition, and created fish habitat that resulted in increased trout abundance. This project is considered phase two and would continue the restoration downstream. The channel would be restored to proper dimensions, plantings and bank treatments would be used to improve the riparian areas, and fence would be installed to operate a grazing management system.

Amount Requested: \$47,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$47,000**).

Project Representative: Ryan Neudecker

Discussion Items:

- Phase 1 of the project was funded by Future Fisheries.
- Bull Trout have been detected in the creek, but the numbers are low. Genetic purity is not 100%.
- The project anticipates a 2017 construction window.
- The sediment inputs on the application are over estimated (using BEHI).

Motion: Motion to approve the requested funding of \$47,000

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Michael Johns

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$47,000

- 2) **Bender Creek fish barrier** (001-2017). Bender Creek is a tributary to Johnson Creek and the North Fork of the Big Hole River. It currently supports a non-hybridized (pure) population of Westslope Cutthroat Trout, but they are isolated to a <0.25 mile section of stream. Brook Trout

have out-competed cutthroat trout in much of the stream and are moving into the headwaters area. This project would install a treated lumber fish barrier immediately upstream of a bridge crossing. Once the barrier is installed, the cutthroat trout would be salvaged and Brook Trout would be removed using rotenone. Westslope Cutthroat Trout would be returned to the stream and four miles of habitat would be open for the conservation of this species.

Amount Requested: \$6,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$6,000**) if the applicant can provide detail on the screen configuration, specific location on the barrier, and maintenance needs.

Project Representative: Jim Olsen

Discussion Items:

- There are 50 fish in the creek currently.
- A grant was submitted to the MT Trout Foundation.
- A verbal approval for funding from TU was committed to the project.
- Construction is planned for Fall 2017.
- Habitat is considered good based on the current use by Brook Trout.

Motion: Motion to approve the requested amount of \$6,000 for the project.

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Karin Boyd

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$6,000

- 6) **Sevenmile Creek fish passage** (016-2017). Sevenmile Creek (Lewis & Clark County) is a tributary to Tenmile Creek that supports populations of Brown Trout and Brook Trout. In 2017, the Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT) acquired a 350-acre parcel of land in the Helena Valley that included approximately 2.2 miles of Sevenmile Creek. The stream has been heavily impacted by riparian clearing, intensive grazing, flow, diversion, and channelization. As part of a larger project to improve the property, this project addresses a diversion that blocks fish passage and is in danger of having an avulsion. This project would use the avulsion channel to develop a fish passage channel around the diversion. The diversion itself would remain in the stream to ensure legal the water right can be used by the landowner.

Amount Requested: \$25,571.25

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding, with the exception of administration (\$1,250), oversight (\$2,090), and travel (\$868.75) for a total of **\$21,362.50**. We request that the applicants provide a map showing the project location in relation to Tenmile Creek and Helena.

Project Representative: Lisa Bay

Discussion Items:

- The Prickly Pear Land Trust paid for the design work. Other funding for the project is confirmed.

Motion: Motion to approve the recommended amount of \$21,362.50.

Motion Made by: Michael Johns

Motion Second by: Chuck Dalby

Panel Action: 12 Yes, 1 Abstain; Motion passes

Amount Approved: \$21,362.50

- 7) **Thompson River riparian restoration** (019-2017). Thompson River (Sanders County) is a tributary to the Lower Clark Fork River and supports populations of Bull Trout, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Brook Trout, and Mountain Whitefish. Temperature and sediment have been identified as limiting factors for trout populations, and this project intends to address those issues. This project would maintain and expand the protection of planted plants and native plants in a previously restored area. The goal is to improve riparian vegetation conditions, stream temperatures, instream habitat, and connectivity for bull and cutthroat trout (FFIP projects 018-2008, 021-2009; 2014 monitoring showed canarygrass as well as thriving and volunteer willows).

Amount Requested: \$5,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$5,000**) if the applicant can provide detail on pre-project conditions and demonstrate the current degradation, erosion, and/or bank instability. What are/where are the sources of sediment and how much is estimated to be mitigated by this project? Why is this project necessary (versus allowing for natural recruitment)?

Project Representative: None Present

Discussion Items:

- It is not clear if the landowner is willing to sign a maintenance agreement.
- It is not clear if the project has degradation and how much of an impact this project would have.
- Access may be a concern in the area.

Motion: Motion to not approve funding for the project.

Motion Made by: Michael Johns

Motion Second by: Terry Chute

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$0

- 8) **Wegner Creek fish barrier** (017-2017). Wegner Creek (Lewis & Clark County) currently supports populations of Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout, and Rocky Mountain Sculpin. The location was recently acquired by FWP to add to the Beartooth Wildlife Management Area. The applicant proposes to blast and remove rock from a natural rock chute, creating a barrier that could be used for conservation of Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Rocky Mountain Sculpin. After the barrier is constructed, the stream would be reclaimed, genetically pure Westslope Cutthroat Trout would be introduced, and Rocky Mountain Sculpin would be returned. A six-foot high barrier is planned. The goal of this project is to expand conservation areas of Westslope Cutthroat Trout.

Amount Requested: \$5,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$5,000**) with the condition that the funds are not used for contingency. We also require that the applicant provide design information to demonstrate how the barrier will prevent upstream movement at a range of streamflows and why a 6-foot drop was chosen. Please discuss maintenance relative to erosion, deposition, woody debris buildup, or other changes that might affect fish passage.

Project Representative: Grant Grisak

Discussion Items:

- There is not an immediate need for the project. Considered important, not urgent.
- A geologist has not looked at the rock for erosion.

- MEPA compliance will be completed by FWP staff. NEPA compliance takes 2-3 months.
- The project was designed based on the designs on Cottonwood and Elkhorn Creeks; and planned for a 100-year water event
- Fishing is possible but not likely.

Motion: Motion not to fund the project at this time.

Motion Made by: Clint Peck

Motion Second by: Michael Johns

Panel Action: 12 Yes, 1 No; Motion Passes

Amount Approved: \$0

- 9) **Williams Creek riparian fencing** (018-2017). Williams Creek (Judith Basin County) is a tributary to Big Otter Creek near Raynesford. It supports populations of Brown Trout, Brook Trout, and Rainbow Trout. Cattle currently access the stream and this project would install riparian fencing to control livestock access, construct a hardened crossing, and develop a spring for off-stream water. The goals are to improve fish habitat through riparian growth, reduced sedimentation, and overall stream health.

Amount Requested: \$9,220

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$9,220**) but request additional information on the hardened crossing specifications as well as the distance between the stream and the fencing (riparian buffer). A map showing the project area relative to the general vicinity would be helpful.

Project Representative: Jay Bodner

Discussion Items:

- This is a fishable stream. There are 13 fishing access sites on Big Otter Creek.
- The grazing plan will be completed in late fall.
- The riparian buffer will be 10-15 ft. wide.

Motion: Motion to approve the requested amount of \$9,220.

Motion Made by: Jeff Hinkle

Motion Second by: Clint Peck

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$9,220

- 10) **Horse Creek grazing management and stream restoration** (005-2017). Horse Creek (Park County) is a tributary to the Shields River and currently supports populations of nonhybridized Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and is considered to be of high conservation value. The project area has been degraded by grazing practices. The applicant proposes to install riparian fencing, create off stream stock water, and restore eroding terraces by creating floodplain benches with wetland sod. Mature willow will be planted on site. The goal is to improve water quality and improve habitat in an important cutthroat trout stream.

Amount Requested: \$25,471.75

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$25,471.75**).

Project Representative: None present

Discussion Items:

- The panel is unsure of the urgency of the project.
- The specific type of off-stream water needed by the landowner may change. Further discussion is needed.

Motion: Motion to table the application.

Motion Made by: Terry Chute

Motion Second by: Bill Wichers

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$0

- 11) **Sauerkraut Creek instream flow lease (015-2017).** Sauerkraut Creek (Lewis & Clark County) is a tributary to the Blackfoot River that supports populations of Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout. Historically, the upper reaches of Sauerkraut Creek were severely modified by mining and the middle and lower reaches were impaired by irrigation withdrawals. Since 2008, Sauerkraut Creek has been the focus of stream restoration and conservation efforts and the current project is a continuation of those efforts. This project would lease a minimum of 3.0 cfs, up to 9 cfs, in a split-season water rights lease to augment stream flow, especially during the low-flow season, for 20 years. The goal is to improve conditions for resident and migratory Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout that are most significant during the low flow season.

Amount Requested: \$20,000

FWP Recommendation: We recommend full funding (**\$20,000**). However, we would like to know if the price of the instream flow lease will decrease (and therefore, the FFIP request), if only 3 cfs is obtained through the lease and DNRC change process.

Project Representative:

Discussion Items:

- The request is reduced to \$10,000 due to additional funding from Trout Unlimited.

Motion: Motion to approve \$10,000 for the project.

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Joseph Willauer

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Amount Approved: \$10,000

Additional Panel Discussion:

Additional funds request for completed FFIP project:

An approved Future Fisheries project (Redwater River culvert fish passage 023-2013) was recently completed but with significant cost overages. In statute, the department is allowed to issue overage funds not to exceed 10% of the original grant award. The overage ask is for \$10,000.

Discussion:

- The panel can choose to deny the request, partially fund the request, or can give Michelle the option of using some of her excess operational monies to fund the shortage.

Motion: Motion to let Michelle use any remaining funds from the Future Fisheries operational budget to fund the shortage if feasible.

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Alan Johnstone

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Review of Funded Projects and Available Funding:

The panel is over budget and needs to reduce the approved project funding to \$236,456.78.

Discussion:

- The panel discussed projects based on urgency and merit, and considered possible reductions in funding.

1st Motion: Motion to remove funding for the **LaValle Creek culvert replacement** (007-2017).

Motion Made by: Bill Wichers

Motion Second by: Jeff Welborn

Panel Action: 8 Yes, 3 No, 1 No Vote, 1 Absent; Motion passes

2nd Motion: Motion to reduce the funding to \$9,000 for the **East Fork Bitterroot River riparian fencing and revegetation** (003-2017), and use funds for fencing and some plantings.

Motion Made by: Karin Boyd

Motion Second by: Bill Wichers

Panel Action: Approved Unanimously

Further Discussion:

- The panel asked the ranking committee (Terry, Michelle, Bruce) to complete a prioritization of the projects for further funding cuts.*

Adjourn

*The ranking committee completed prioritization on December 21, 2016 and suggested funding the projects according to rank until funds were exhausted. This procedure funded all projects as recommended at the Review Panel meeting, with the exception of a partial fund for Jack Creek riparian restoration (006-2017), which will be funded at \$10,014.48. This was approved by the review panel majority vote via email.